



NEWS RELEASE

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From: Wendy K. Ferrell
wendy.ferrell@courts.wa.gov

Justice James M. Johnson announces retirement from the Washington Supreme Court effective April 30

March 17—In a letter to Governor Jay Inslee, Washington Supreme Court Justice James M. Johnson announced today that he will resign from the bench effective April 30, 2014.

"This has been a difficult decision, as it has been a tremendous honor to serve the people of the State of Washington for the past ten years on over 1,000 cases," said Justice Jim Johnson. "While I have been grateful for this opportunity, recent health concerns have led me to decide that this was the right time to retire from the bench and spend time with my family and traveling," he said.

Johnson was first elected to the court in 2004, and reelected in 2010. Prior to joining the court, Johnson was a long-serving assistant attorney general and had a private practice in constitutional law.

"Justice Jim Johnson has brought an important perspective to the court's deliberations over the years," said Chief Justice Barbara Madsen. "While his departure will be a loss for the Court, we wish him and his family all the best."

"Jim has been a hard working member of the Washington Supreme Court, and brought particular expertise on election and voting issues which has been valuable to the Court," added retired Chief Justice Gerry Alexander. "On a personal level, I always found him to be a congenial colleague and enjoyed working with him in the pursuit of justice."

The Seattle native attended Harvard University and the University of Washington School of Law. He spent two years in the United States Army, Ninth Infantry Division, including serving as that Division's Top Secret control officer and Dive Team commander.

As a Washington State Assistant Attorney General, Johnson headed the Fish and Wildlife Division and later the Special Litigation Division. In private practice, Justice Johnson wrote and/or defended Initiative 601 (capping the state budget), Initiative 747 (1% limit on property tax annual increase unless voter approved) and Initiative 872 (Washington voters no longer restricted to one political party). He vows to continue such efforts, to protect and exercise the people's right to control government.

"Having worked with Justice Jim Johnson for a number of years as the Attorney General, I know that his career has been motivated by a love for the Washington State Constitution and the

people in our State,” said former U.S. Senator and Washington State Attorney General Slade Gorton. “On their behalf, I thank him for his service.”

Throughout his legal career, he has argued nearly 100 appellate cases in three different federal Courts of Appeal, the Washington Supreme Court and Washington Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. Two of those cases guaranteed Washington an additional Congressional seat in 1990.

Supreme Court Justices are elected statewide, for six-year terms. His term was set to expire in January of 2017. In the event of a vacancy, an election is set to fill out the remainder of a justice’s term. The Governor may also appoint a justice to serve until the general election.

Further biographical information can be found online at www.courts.wa.gov

CONTACTS: Justice James M. Johnson, Washington Supreme Court, 360.357.2033; Chief Justice Barbara Madsen, Washington Supreme Court, 360.357.2038.

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Editor’s Note: When reporting, please be aware that there are two justices on the Court with the last name of Johnson. Please state Justice James M. Johnson’s full name to avoid confusion with Associate Chief Justice Charles W. Johnson.